



Chapter 4: Victim Services/Crisis Response Recommendations

Recommendations found in this section are referred to as third tier prevention strategies, which aim to help individuals who have already suffered negative consequences from domestic and/or sexual violence from experiencing on-going adverse effects. Strategies include allowing victims to reestablish safe, stable, healthy and self-sufficient lives for themselves and their families, and ensuring that victims have access to services and support that protect them from on-going victimization. The recommendations are broken into two categories: direct services and systems changes. Recommendations in the direct services category concern victim-focused activities. Recommendations under systems changes focus on changes in policies, protocols, and procedures that will impact victim services, but don't impact the victim directly.

Recommendations

Victim Services/Crisis Response

Arizona currently has a tremendous network of 13 Family Advocacy Centers throughout the state. Family Advocacy Centers (FACs) provide a unique array of services to victims in one location including: providing needed referrals and services, such as counseling or support groups; attending to medical needs or examinations; and obtaining Orders of Protection via remote access to the courts. FACs also assist in the collection of forensic evidence in the instance of a sexual assault or take pictures after a domestic violence incident. Some FACs have law enforcement on the premises, which can be helpful in filing a legal complaint against an abuser. While it is helpful for law enforcement to be on the premises, interaction with them should not be a requirement for accessing services offered by FACs.

Victim Services/Crisis Response - Direct Services: 4.1

Encourage the development of Family Advocacy Centers Statewide that will be supportive of victims of domestic and sexual violence.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - Direct Services:
4.2**

Crime free housing policies should hold harmless those victims of domestic violence who contact police to respond to an incident of domestic violence.

“Crime Free/Drug Free Addendums” are housing policies that allow landlords to evict a tenant(s) if police are called or a crime is committed in the residence of a multi-family housing unit. Oftentimes, landlords have used these policies as a reason for serving eviction papers on victims following a domestic violence episode. This can deter victims from reaching out for help for their abuse for fear of being evicted.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - Direct Services:
4.3**

Support the development of housing options, including emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, for victims of domestic violence trying to escape abuse.

The creation of more emergency shelter, as well as transitional and permanent housing units is necessary so that victims and their children remain safe and are not forced to return to their abusers due to lack of options. In Arizona today, 2 out of every 3 women and children who request shelter are turned away, and the lack of affordable housing options fails to satisfy the demand. As a consequence, many victims and their children have very few options for finding an escape from the abuse and, oftentimes become homeless. Homeless service providers also need to be prepared to respond to victims of domestic violence.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - Direct Services:
4.4**

Provide access to legal representation and advocacy in both civil and criminal matters so that victims may seek justice and safety from abuse.

Victims need access to legal representation to ensure that their rights are represented in criminal and civil matters. Adequate and affordable legal representation is especially critical at a time when abusers use power and control tactics to gain advantage over their victims, particularly in custody and divorce proceedings. However, many victims of domestic violence cannot afford legal counsel and there are currently insufficient free legal services to support the demand. Attorneys should be encouraged through the State Bar and their employers to volunteer services. Employers should also be encouraged to offer attorneys pro bono credit or other incentives to volunteer.



Victims from specialized populations require unique services. Specialized populations include persons with severe mental illness (SMI) and/or drug and alcohol addictions, the elderly, multicultural, LGBT, refugees and undocumented persons from other countries, survivors of trafficking, families with teen boys, male victims, persons with developmental or physical disabilities, teens, HIV+ and children. To best serve these victims, existing service providers need to develop partnerships with organizations that have expertise in specialized populations and can provide access to resources. Greater collaboration and cross-trainings will help ensure that all facets of a victim's profile are understood and addressed.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - Direct Services:
4.5**

**Encourage service providers
to develop partnerships
with organizations that
have expertise in
specialized populations and
can provide access to
resources.**

The more a client has input into his or her own case plan, the increased likelihood for success of self-sufficiency. An empowerment-based model for case management and assessment ensures that victims receive the services they need to reach self-sufficiency in the time they are in shelter. The Need for Services Assessment instrument is one example of such a tool being used by a number of shelters statewide to assess victim's needs at various points during their stay in shelter. This instrument also allows shelter staff to appropriately identify trends so that programs can structure their services to meet the needs of their clients.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - Direct Services:
4.6**

**Encourage service providers
to use a client-driven,
empowerment case
management tool, such as
the Need for Services
Assessment (NFSA).**



**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - System Changes:
4.7**

**Create and implement an
Ombudsman or review
panel for first responders
including law enforcement
and the Courts.**

A review panel made up of domestic and sexual violence advocates, first responders, legal and law enforcement professionals, community members and survivors could review complaints from victims, address systems issues, and recommend areas of needed improvements. Ideally the panel would serve as a sounding board for people who come into contact with these groups and to make recommendations for better serving victims and systems changes. Recently, SB1237, signed by the Governor in the 2004 Legislative Session, creates a review panel and process for making complaints against custody evaluators and other psychologists who are part of cases in the domestic relations court.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - System Changes:
4.8**

**Strengthen the
coordination of activities
and priorities of the state
agencies with regards to
domestic and sexual
violence through the State
Agencies Coordinating
Team (SACT).**

SACT is made up of eight state agencies that in some way or another fund domestic and sexual violence services including: the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission; Arizona Department of Housing; Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts; Arizona Department of Economic Security; Arizona Department of Health Services; Arizona Department of Public Safety; Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families (Division for Women); and the Office of the Arizona Attorney General. The mission of SACT is "to collaboratively assess needs, maximize state and federal resources, support intervention and prevention activities, and improve quality services for domestic violence and sexual assault victims while positively influencing family violence policies and practices." Each year, SACT reports on their coordinated activities and sets their strategic plan for the following year. SACT should continue to coordinate its efforts and determine how to maximize their collective funding for systems change.

Although most domestic violence shelters are not behavioral health treatment facilities, The Department of Health Services, Office of Behavioral Health Licensure currently regulates them. While many victims may suffer from behavioral health symptoms, their victimization is not an indication that they suffer from a mental illness. The purpose of domestic violence shelters is to provide safety for women and their children seeking refuge from abuse, and having behavioral health license domestic violence shelters implies that this is a behavioral health issue. Other appropriate forms of accrediting and licensing of domestic violence shelters need to be explored and considered.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - System Changes:
4.9**

**Determine best method of
accrediting or licensing
domestic violence shelters.**

The 2000 reauthorization of the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides a number of protections for battered immigrant women (BIW). Oftentimes, BIW face a myriad of obstacles such as fear of deportation, having their children taken away by their abusive partner, language barriers, and trouble accessing services they are entitled to under VAWA. Many service providers in the community, including victim advocates, faith-based groups, first responders and law enforcement, do not know of the protections afforded under the Violence Against Women Act. Therefore, more needs to be done to educate and train those who might come into contact with battered immigrant. Through a grant from the Department of Justice, the Governor's Office has assisted in the development of regional teams to address the issue of identifying and serving battered immigrant women in the border communities. Continuing to support these teams is critical to addressing the training and resource needs of battered immigrant women in the state.

**Victim Services/Crisis
Response - System Changes:
4.10**

**Improve the delivery of
services to battered
immigrant women,
including improving access
to the provision of the
Violence Against Women
Act that allows battered
immigrant women to self-
petition for citizenship
status.**

Victim Services/Crisis Response - System Changes: 4.11

Improve the coordination of basic needs (aka mainstream) resources such as housing, food stamps, TANF and SSI so that they are accessible to victims/survivors.

Survivors of domestic violence, particularly those who are in domestic violence shelters, need access to mainstream resources that can assist them in becoming self-sufficient and safe. The Governor's Children's Cabinet is developing ways to streamline eligibility criteria for programs, ensuring clients' access to all services that they are entitled to, and creating maximum utilization of programs by eligible families. Survivors of domestic violence will benefit from these efforts as well.

Victim Services/Crisis Response - System Changes : 4.12

Create a uniform, statewide, standardized curriculum for cross-disciplinary training.

A uniform, statewide, standardized domestic violence training curriculum for health care professionals, social workers, counselors, law enforcement, criminal justice (including prosecution, courts, and probation), mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, and first responders would promote greater consistency in service delivery. This would help to assist those who come into contact with victims and abusers to better respond to their needs. By working together in a multi-disciplinary approach, service delivery systems will promote more victim safety and abuser accountability.

